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ABSTRACT

A tradition of service abroad by Germany's youth has a long history. Many of the earlier activities by German overseas organizations developed after the First and Second World Wars as an attempt to promote peace and reconciliation between Germany and other countries. Reconciliation work is still being done in Israel, the Netherlands, and Poland. The "International Civilian Service" and the Christian Peace Service were formed after the First World War to promote pacifism. The Action Committee World Peace Service serves as an umbrella organization for three reconciliation services whose goal is to promote peace between Germany and the countries it fought during Second World War. A second purpose for the youth exchange between Germany and other European countries is to instill a sense of European awareness and identity in the young people. A third reason for service abroad is to provide young people the opportunity of showing solidarity with developing nations and becoming actively involved in community projects in those countries. The 1969 Development Volunteer Act (amended in 1986) forms the legal basis for West Germany's Development Service, which provides support for young Germans serving in a developing country. Most of the programs today are directed toward social problems, ecology, peace and international solidarity, all of which are subjects in which young people show deep interest. The range of projects is broad, enabling each individual to make a choice close to his or her personal inclinations. (SM)

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Learning by helping

- Young Germans do volunteer work abroad -

by

Cem Akalin

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Selfless volunteer work in the social welfare sector

- What motivates the young - Aims of international youth work -

Bonn (INP) -- The major spontaneous youth movements of recent times in Europe and the United States have been the student unrest of the late 1960s and the ecology-and-peace campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s. In the wake of post-war economic reconstruction and the emergence of the "affluent society" in the industrialised countries, young people began to be aware of the great prosperity gap between "North" and "South" and to sense a need to do something to help the poor nations. In the Federal Republic of Germany, there was a sharp and steady rise in the number of "conscientious objectors" -- young men refusing to be conscripted for compulsory military service and opting, instead, for community service. This affords an opportunity to gather valuable human experience, such as helping people in need of public support.

Before long, young people's willingness to become "socially involved" began to transcend national frontiers. The Federal German government is now allocating increasing amounts of money for the promotion of community activities abroad by young Germans. In the 1987 federal budget, more than 130 million DM was set aside to finance voluntary youth assistance schemes, 2,550,000 DM of it for youth community and social services, 460,000 DM for multilateral programmes and about 1.3 million DM for youth policy cooperation with developing countries. Special funding was made available for the German-French Youth Scheme and the German-American youth exchange scheme.

Guidelines laid down in the so-called "Federal Youth Plan" state that: "International youth work should facilitate personal encounter between young people of various countries, encourage them to learn and work together, stimulate exchanges of views between youth work leaders and promote cooperation between the sponsors of youth aid beyond national borders". The motives were defined by the Federal Minister for Youth, Family, Women and Health: "International youth work should help young people to acquaint themselves with other ways of life and socio-political systems and to understand international relations, to come to grips with these and thus better understand their own situation. Furthermore, it should give them an awareness of their personal responsibility to help secure and democratically develop peace and to work for more liberty and social justice in the

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world". Increasing numbers of young people are joining in the work of international community service, relief and social welfare organisations and taking a share in humanitarian projects. They come forward voluntarily and give their assistance selflessly, looking after the mentally or physically handicapped, doing environmental or nature protection duties or working in agriculture, playing a part in cultural ventures for minorities, looking after memorial sites at former Nazi concentration camps or military cemeteries or helping to renovate children's homes or encounter centres. They also are to be found at archaeological excavation sites or helping in regions affected by natural disasters.

Usually, these "work camps" last three or four weeks, with 30 hours of work per week. Accompanying programmes afford the opportunity for discussions and for gaining experience of host-countries. The young participants are always in the charge of specialists running the projects and receive guidance from former participants. With the exception of disaster relief projects, work camps take place during the school vacation periods. Most of the relief workers are school pupils and students aged between 16 and 25 and the work camps both in the Federal Republic of Germany and in other countries are generally attended by youngsters from various European and non-European countries.

Apart from the more general objectives, there are also specific ventures with a historical background. When the German-French Youth Scheme was launched in 1963, for example, reconciliation between the two nations was the foremost aim. It is still valid in relation to Israel, the Netherlands or Poland. However, another purpose of youth exchange between the Federal Republic of Germany and neighbouring European countries is to instil the idea of Europe in them, to give young people a European awareness and a European identity. Projects involving eastern European countries are seen as a small contribution to dialogue between different social, political and ideological attitudes.

Young people here are encouraged to grasp the opportunity of showing "practical" solidarity with deprived nations and becoming actively involved in community projects in give-and-take with Third World peoples. There are also schemes involving relations with numerous countries in which young Germans are required to help establish and

run organisations and build up youth organisational structures, an example being the "St. Georg" German Scouts movement in Bolivia, helping young Bolivians to establish their own scout movement.

Over the past ten years, there has been a major expansion of international youth community service and social welfare work. Juveniles and adolescents are showing more and more interest in taking part in these relatively inexpensive programmes which link community work with the opportunity to gain experience of contemporaries.

More than 100 organisations receiving financial assistance from the Federal German government range from scout groups to sports associations or church organisations to trade union or political party-orientated groupings. The main organisations involved in international youth community service and social welfare services are:

- "Service for Peace" (Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden), Bonn
- Protestant Youth Association (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Evangelischen Jugend), Stuttgart
- Association of International Community Service Organisations (Arbeitskreis internationaler Gemeinschaftsdienste), Frankfurt-on-Main
- Federal Association of International Social Services (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft internationale soziale Dienste), Cologne
- International Youth Community Services (Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste), Bonn
- Service Civil International, Bonn
- German War Graves Conservation Federation (Volksbund Deutscher Kriegsgräberfürsorge), Kassel.

"Extended" community service

The 1969 Development Volunteer Act forms the legal basis for the Federal Republic of Germany's Development Service, which foresees service for a limited period but without gainful intentions in a Third World country. The legislation was amended in 1986 setting the lower age limit for volunteers at 18 years. Not only was this an open invitation to young people - it was also necessary to bring this country into line with the terms of the European Volunteer Programme, which promotes involvement by young experts aged between 18 and 25 in development cooperation ventures. The average age of most development aid volunteers is over 30. The amendment also for the first time opens the German Development Service to non-Germans from other European Community countries.
(3)

Young men of military conscription age in the Federal Republic of Germany are exempt from military service up to the age of 30 if they can furnish proof that they have spent at least two years working as a development aid volunteer for a recognized development service. Confirmation must come from the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation (development aid). Conscientious objection to military service is a standing right under the constitution (Basic Law) of the Federal Republic of Germany. But those refusing to wear a uniform and carry weapons are legally obliged to perform substitute community service as stipulated by law, which states that it must serve the common good. In particular, such duties include work in hospitals and similar institutions or obligatory service in disaster relief or important community and economic tasks in the water economy or agriculture.

The law also states that young men can be excused community service if, prior to completion of their 24th year, they have contractually undertaken to perform non-remunerative work abroad in a manner approved by the Federal Minister for Youth, Family, Women and Health and the Foreign Ministry. The Federal Office for Civil Defence in Cologne defines this service as "promoting peaceful international cooperation for a period at least two months longer than community service, which they would otherwise have to perform".

"Development helpers"

Following the tradition of the international brigades who fought Franco in the Spanish Civil War, they call themselves "brigadiers". However, the work they do in the central American state of Nicaragua has been surrounded by controversy since a group of volunteers was abducted in 1986 and since the violent deaths of three "development workers". The authorities in Managua, the Nicaraguan capital, have allowed no "Internacionalistas" to enter danger zones since July, 1986, when German development volunteer Bernhard Koberstein was killed during hostilities.

Gerhard Thiedemann, who has responsibilities in international youth policy and youth work at the Bonn Federal Ministry for Youth, Family, Women and Health, explains: "On principle, we are opposed to the deployment of young Germans in crisis regions. Regardless of whether it's Nicaragua or Sri Lanka or any other country, their safety must not be put at risk. But of course, the Youth Welfare Act classifies them as worthy of sponsorship if they are engaged in work among social groups, for example, in Managua (the capital of Nicaragua), where it can be assumed that no war activities are in progress".

Sponsoring organisations

Germany has had international youth community and social service organisations since 1920. The "International Civilian Service" and the "Christian Peace Service" began work for international understanding on the basis of pacifism after the First World War. After World War Two, the international youth community and social services attained new significance. For many youngsters, international work camps afforded an opportunity to emerge from isolation. But international youth work was also a means of reinstating German identity through cooperation with other countries in the form of participation in reconstruction work.

The public utility organisation sponsoring German international youth community and social services is a loose amalgam of various groupings involved in international youth work. It has a limited mandate to discuss and decide on matters arising from the promotion of its work from funds provided by the Federal Youth Plan. However, member-organisations carry responsibility for their own programmes from the point of view of finance and personnel. (The individual sponsor-organisations and their addresses are listed in the appendix)

"Operation Atonement" and peace services

"We Germans started the Second World War and, through that alone, we have inflicted more suffering on mankind than others ... notwithstanding our duty to take conscientious political decisions, we can counteract self-righteousness, bitterness and hatred if we ourselves truly forgive, beg forgiveness and practise this spirit. In this spirit, we ask the nations which suffered violence at our hands to permit us to do good in their countries with our hands and our wherewithall - to build a village, a housing estate, a church or a hospital or whatever else they want in a communal sense, as a sign of atonement". "Operation Atonement" (Aktion Sühnezeichen) was launched by Rev. Lothar Kreyssig with these words at the Synod of the Protestant Church in Germany in 1958. Peace through reconciliation -- this was the objective of Aktion Sühnezeichen which began operating in western Europe in 1959. Young German volunteers helped to build churches and social amenities. Work also began Israel after the trial and execution of the Nazi criminal Adolf Eichmann in 1961; it began in Poland in 1967 and in the Soviet Union in the early 1970s. In 1968, churches in the United States of America asked for German volunteers to be sent there.

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Volunteers must attend a four-week preparatory course and undertake a journey to Poland and a visit to one of three concentration camp memorial sites. Every year, Aktion Sühnezeichen recruits about 150 volunteers, who are committed to 15 months service, leaving the country in groups in March or September. Of the 3.8 to four million DM available to Aktion Sühnezeichen annually, 170,000 comes from the funds of the Federal Youth Plan, with most of the money contributed by the churches and private donors.

Since the mid-1960s, Aktion Sühnezeichen volunteers have been working in so-called "social projects", involving duties among fringe groups of society. Today, about 160 volunteers are spending either 18 or 24 months in Israel, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Poland and the United States. Their projects range from work with underpriveleged children and adolescents, the handicapped, ex-convicts and drug addicts to district work in slums or in Jewish-Arab initiative ventures in Israel. Every year, Aktion Sühnezeichen sends some 50 groups to Poland to carry out care and maintenance projects in the memorial sites at Auschwitz, Maidanek and Stutthof. Seminars and encounter sessions with the participation of young Poles are also organised. Last year, work was completed on the construction of an international youth encounter centre near Auschwitz.

The World Peace Service

The "Campaign Committee for the Starving" was founded in 1957, Aktion Sühnezeichen one year later. The third of the so-called "reconciliation services" -- the umbrella term for all three -- is the "Action Committee World Peace Service", another organisation proposed by Rev. Lothar Kreyssig. A few days before Christmas 1959, about 70 founding members from the Federal Republic of Germany as well as the GDR met at the Protestant Academy on the shore of Berlin's Wannsee lake. They included representatives of existing volunteer services such as Aktion Sühnezeichen, the International Reconciliation Federation, Service Civil International, the Brethern Service Commission, the Protestant Church and the German Trades Union Federation.

Participants laid plans for an international peace service with the aim of combatting aggression and hatred by means of practical reconstruction work designed to bring nations together, initially at Servia in Greece. (During the Second World War, German troops destroyed Servia and massacred its inhabitants)
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The World Peace Service - like the other reconciliation organisations - can be regarded as part of the peace movement of the 1950s. In the early 1960s, the World Peace Service (WFD) launched a series of small projects, deploying volunteers in Africa and Asia. The legislation on development volunteers at the end of the 1960s and official recognition of WFD as a development service strengthened its capacity to handle bigger projects.

Since the middle of the 1970s, WFD has specialised in the promotion of community development. For WFD, participation, self-determination and self-help are key criteria and elements of the methods it employs in the belief that only active participation by the population in the solution of its own problems assures effective development aid. The young volunteers still work in the Third World in the conviction that they are performing a kind of reconciliation service, as expressly postulated at the founding of WFD. Public relations and educational work is directed towards drawing attention to the continuing plight not only of Third World countries, but also of the industrialised states themselves.

German Federation for the Care of War Graves

Young people can still perform work of atonement through the German Federation for the Care of War Graves. Using the motto "Reconciliation over graves - Work for peace", the federation organised its first work camp at Lommel in Belgium in 1953. Since then, youngsters have been given the opportunity to witness the consequences of violent conflict in 22 countries in which German soldiers are buried. Not only the actual work in war cemeteries, but also the confrontation with other countries and their people and different ways of life is part of the plan to teach the young generation how to be tolerant and thus contribute to surmounting prejuduces. Educational schemes give participants insight into historic developments as well as the present-day political, economic and social situation in the countries to which they are sent. Originally, the federation was founded in 1919 "in memory of the millions of humans who died in the First World War in the realisation that their testament is an appeal to all nations to seek understanding and peace and in the endeavour to ease the suffering of surviving relatives". For some years now, the federation has cooperated with the Austrian Black Cross (ÖSK), a partner-organisation, in running an annual youth camp at the site of the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. Here, young boys and girls and men and women aged between 16 and 27 learn that violent conflict is more than war. (7)

Every year, some 3,000 young people take part in the federation's volunteer programme. Total costs of the youth work carried out by this organisation are around 1.1 million DM.

Service Civil International - German branch

The oldest volunteer organisation is Service Civil International (SCI) founded in 1920 by Pierre Ceresole of Switzerland with the intention of creating a long-term, pacifist, internationally-orientated volunteer service as a constructive civilian alternative to compulsory military national service. In the wake of the First World War, this was an attempt to demonstrate that it was possible to co-exist with people who thought and lived differently from the majority.

SCI today has 23 branches in Europe and Asia and concentrates on short-term work camps. It advises the Council of Europe and is a member of the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service in UNESCO. The German branch was founded in 1946.

SCI operates on the principle of living, learning and working together in international groups. Every year, its German branch organises 60 international work camps in the Federal Republic of Germany, with some 600 young foreigners taking part, and sends about 900 young Germans abroad to participate in work camps organised by eastern and western European countries in Turkey, West Africa and Asia. A new feature of its programme is exchanges with organisations connected with the peace movement in the United States of America.

This year, 988 young Germans and foreigners attended work camps in the Federal Republic of Germany and 901 German youngsters took part in volunteer programmes abroad. Service Civil International's total budget amounts to just under one million DM. Global funds for sponsors drawn from the Federal Youth Plan total 110,000 DM, the total set aside for the European "youth weeks" 76,000 DM and programmes for Africa and Asia 56,000 DM. Additionally, there are "bilateral" funds. SCI receives grants of some 520,000 DM per year.

Service overseas - Protestant Church Association

By the time Service Overseas (Dienste im Übersee - DÜ) was formed in 1960, the then recently launched campaign "Bread for the World"- an initiative taken by Protestant Christians in the Federal Republic of Germany - had demonstrated the effectiveness of major fund-raising campaigns. The aim was to render "a contribution to over-

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coming hunger and poverty in developing countries". Before long, those involved were forced to realise that money alone was not enough to start a process of economic and social change in poor Third World countries. Young people had to be personally prepared to contribute and cooperate.

At present, more than 200 "DÜ" specialists are in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Latin America, Greece, Italy, Turkey and Cyprus and it has working funds of around 20 million DM. The organisation defines its purpose as "providing selected Protestant specialists in all occupations of importance in overseas development work for overseas churches, national Christian councils, international organisations, government departments, public and private institutions and firms in the countries concerned". The aim is to recruit these experts - particularly in the fields of medicine, technology, education, administration, agriculture and social welfare work - for limited periods of service overseas and to prepare them for their duties there. Experts recruited by "DÜ" usually perform teaching and advisory functions while respecting the independence of counterparts and partners in host-countries. The minimum age of recruits in this case is 25 years. There is close coordination with the work of the Association of Church Development Services whose members, apart from "DÜ", include the "Bread for the World" organisation, the "Protestant Mission Scheme" (EMW), the"Protestant Central Office for Development Aid" (EZE) and the "Church Development Service" (KED). "DÜ" cooperates with the other officially recognised sponsors of development aid manpower in the Federal Republic of Germany within the framework of a working group calling itself "Learning and Helping Overseas", based in Bonn.

Eirene - International Christian Peace Service

"Eirene" is the Greek word for peace and the name of an international ecumenical peace organisation founded in 1957 and officially recognised in 1971 as a development aid service. The Eirene Programme consists of a development service ("Southern Programme"), a volunteer service ("Northern Programme") and a "Solidarity Learning Service" (SLD). The programme concentrates regionally on Niger, Chad, Morocco, Senegal, Nicaragua, Peru and Bangladesh. Volunteers are offered chiefly to France, Spain, Switzerland, Ireland and Belgium and the USA.

The organisation says its work is orientated on the Gospel and the principle of non-violence. "Eirene" - which describes itself as politically and religiously independent - was founded by the historic

"peace churches" of the Mennonites and the Brethern in collaboration with the International Reconciliation Federation and various European Christians.

"Eirene's" 1986 financial report shows that it had a budget of around 2.1 million DM. About 670,000 DM came from public bodies (e.g. the European Community, the Federal German Ministry of Economic Cooperation). Some 10 percent (220,000 DM) was contributed by members (including the Netherlands, Swiss and French branches of the organisation); 35.2 percent of revenue (about 750,000 DM) is listed in the report as grants from churches and relief organisations (such as the Church Development Service or "Bread for the World"). More than 490,000 DM appears as donations from parishes, campaign committees and individuals. The major part of expenditure - about 1.3 million DM - is accounted for by programmes on the African continent, with some 180,000 DM going to Latin America and just under 140,000 DM to western Europe and the USA.

While the Development Service concentrates on activities in the agriculture and manual trades sectors, volunteer services are active in the spheres of peace and non-violence, reconciliation, ecology and work among the under-priveleged and persons who are victims of discrimination. The Solidarity and Teaching Service helps other organisations to build up learning-orientated volunteer services overseas. Most of the "Eirene" volunteers are conscientious objectors to military service assigned to social peace services abroad or to a development service instead of community service in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Young Germans' experiences abroad

Partners and projects are selected by the individual sponsor-organisations according to the type of work they do. Naturally, these undergo a process of change. The kind of reconstruction work performed in the immediate post-war years is no longer called for. More important today are social problems, ecology, peace and international solidarity, all of which are subjects in which young people show deep interest. The range of projects is broad, enabling each individual to make a choice close to his or her personal inclinations. Social and educational services offer many possibilities. Volunteers work in old people's homes or with children, with the behaviourally disturbed, with the handicapped, with the homeless and destitute,

with foreigners and with drug addicts. They are deployed in neighbourhood homes and community service centres, in cityscape work or in cultural and community centres. In the ecology sphere, young people spend their school or university vacations at work on the preservation of natural assets for recreational purposes. They receive an insight into alternative crop-growing methods or energy sources. Peace and reconciliation services make provision for the study of fascism in former Nazi concentration camps. They show solidarity with the Third World at work camps in Latin America, Africa or Asia. Some of the projects and experiences embraced during stays abroad by young people are described in the following pages.

Service in the social and educational spheres

Helping the disabled in Norway and the USA

"Aktion Sühnezeichen" began its work in Norway in 1959, when volunteers from the Federal Republic of Germany set about building kitchens and ancillary facilities for a home for the handicapped. One year later, volunteers helped reconstruct a church in Kokelv and the reconciliation service has been continued in the "social peace" sphere since 1967/68. Today, 15 German volunteers are in Norway under a permanent arrangement to help in work with handicapped children, adolescents and adults.

Young Germans have been doing social work in the USA only since 1968. The first volunteers from Aktion Sühnezeichen travelled there at that time at the invitation of the Quakers, the traditional churches, the Brethern and the Mennonites. At that time, the churches of peace were concerned chiefly with two problems - the growing demand for equal rights by the black population and the war in Vietnam. The programmes of those "pioneer" days spawned the beginnings of present-day volunteer work.

For example, Christian Lahusen worked for a neighbourhood project run by the Camden Lutheran Church in Camden, an amalgam of four Protestant parishes in the town. Camden is like a social powder keg. Of the 85,000 inhabitants, 55 percent are black, 35 percent Puerto Rican and 10 percent white. The situation on the labour market is catastrophic, with more than 40 percent of adults and 60 percent of the young employable population out of work. More than half the population of this American township live from State welfare. Church social welfare work is concentrated on providing

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people with basic essentials -- food, clothing and a roof over their heads.

Service Civil International has also been running work camps in the USA and Canada since 1982. The German department in Bonn co-operates with SCI in New York and the Volunteers for Peace (VFP) in Vermont. Their programme states that contacts with the Americans should stimulate reflection on the individual's own image of America, perhaps encourage corrections and bring about better understanding between the people of both countries.

Reconciliation services in Poland

Work by German volunteers at memorial sites such as war graves or former concentration camps is among the longest-standing activities. Since 1967, groups of young Germans have been performing duties at the Auschwitz, Maidanek and Stutthof concentration camp memorial sites. Apart from specialised work in the library or archive, they also help in maintenance duties, clearing weeds, digging drainage ditches, tarring the roofs of barracks, etc.

One group assigned to the Auschwitz memorial site was required to remove a 500-metre strip of grass to uncover a strip of gravel and return the site to its original appearance. Veronika Hitpass wrote to Aktion Sühnezeichen afterwards: "On that site especially, we made the symbolic experience that we must not let grass grow over the crimes of the Nazi era and that we were in a position to make a practical contribution towards maintaining the memorial site".

Rudi Piwko looked after 20 groups of volunteers which each spent one week working at the former Stutthof concentration camp in a parallel programme to studies. He spent 16 months at this camp near Gdansk in Poland.

Development aid in Chad

Chad is one of Africa's poorest countries. Its war with neighbouring Libya has been making headlines in the Federal Republic of Germany since the outset of hostilities. The "Eirene" peace service has been active there, as it has in Niger and Nicaragua. The first volunteers, teachers Monika and Karl-Heinz Eggensperger, arrived there in 1975 to work at the Collège Evangélique in N'Djamena. Many foreigners left Chad because of the civil war in 1979, when Gerhard Katz began building up the "Art Godon" cooperative and started work with weaverwomen from Mombaroua. In May 1983, "Eirene" concluded a tech-

nical cooperation agreement with the government of the Chad republic. Some 600 women are engaged in work for the weavers' cooperative in Mombaroua. Using simple apparatus, they weave colourful bands which are eventually turned into tablecloths, travelling rugs and other similar products. Christopher Nick and a Chadian colleague, Adama, organise a market every two months. Christopher has administrative duties in the cooperative -- book-keeping, sales, correspondence and negotiations with the authorities.

Daniel Ehmann, aged 24, is a farmer who spent two years as a development aid volunteer working for a mission station run by the European Mennonite Evangelisation Committee in Am Sénéna, not far from the capital. He had responsibilities in a village development programme. The production and sale of charcoal is an important source of income in some villages. "But an excess of cattle and the work of the charcoal-makers have had disastrous effects on the vegetation in recent years," reports Daniel. Years of drought had turned the landscape into an arid wilderness and one of his functions was to give the villagers instruction in ecological problems.

Ecology camps in Europe

Ecology camps are not only organised for volunteers to help preserve and maintain vital ecological systems, so-called "wet biotopes". By helping to compile documentation on destruction of the environment, they also contribute to the development of ecological strategies. There is also cooperation with local initiatives abroad. In the Federal Republic of Germany, SCI camps are organised in cooperation with the "Nature and Environment Protection Federation" and the "Federation of Citizens' Environmental Protection Campaign Committees". On Scotland's Fair Isle island, for example, volunteers live in a hostel built by participants in work camps and contribute to improvement of the infrastructure as well as helping to maintain important bird sanctuaries. In cooperation with Britain's own foundation for nature protection volunteers, projects are carried out in nature preserves and parks in the Liverpool area, with young volunteers building paths and ponds and tending heaths and woods. Volunteers can work and live on farms in France during the summer months in schemes coordinated by SCI.

One project at Zlatna Dolina in Yugoslavia involves studies of plant and animal life and the construction of feeding-places for game and of lookout towers. This is the site of one of Europe's

last surviving sand regions, where experiments in the growing of flora and fauna have been conducted for many years.

There is hardly any country or region in the world in which young people are not engaged in social tasks and, whatever they are doing, it represents valuable experience. Young Germans gain insight into their own homeland's past as well as gaining an understanding of its social structure and its ecology. It helps them to realise that history, society and the environment must always be viewed in an international context.

Their active solidarity with the victims of the Nazi regime, with the handicapped, with drug addicts, with the homeless and with other groups "on the fringe of society" and everday experiences in a strange environment render them more receptive to the realities that affect their own lives.

(IN-Press)

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Important addresses

Aktion Sühnezeichen - Friedensdienste e.V.
Jebenstrasse 1, 1ooo Berlin 12

Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden e.V.
Blücherstrasse 14, 53oo Bonn 1

Arbeitskreis Internationaler Gemeinschaftsdienste in Deutschland e.V.
Auf der Körnerwiese 5, 6ooo Frankfurt/Main 1

Arbeitskreis "Lernen und Helfen in Übersee" e.V.
Truchsessstrasse 100, 53oo Bonn 2

Aufbauwerk der Jugend in Deutschland e.V. - Gemeinschaft für den freiwilligen internationalen Arbeitseinsatz
Zur Kalkkaute 21, 355o Marburg 1 (Wehrshausen)

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Internationale Soziale Dienste e.V.
Kolpingplatz 5-11, 5ooo Köln 1

Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie, Frauen und Gesundheit
Kennedyallee 105-107, 53oo Bonn 2

Bundesamt für den Zivildienst
Sibille-Hartmann-Strasse 2-6, 5ooo Köln 51

Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED)
Kladower Damm 299, 1ooo Berlin 22

Dienste in Übersee, Arbeitsgemeinschaft evangelischer Kirchen in Deutschland e.V.
Gerockstrasse 17, 7ooo Stuttgart 1

Eirene, Internationaler Christlicher Friedensdienst e.V.
Engerser Strasse 74b, 5450 Neuwied

Service Civil International - Deutscher Zweig e.V.
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Stiftung Sozialer Friedensdienst Pfalz
Ludwigstrasse 28, 6720 Speyer

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